live ; if on another, its life would be sickly; if on another, ii would perish early."* .

It may be observed, first of all, in reference to the superstitions trust in such connexions, that it is not the legitimate following out of the doctrine of a particular providence. According to that doctrine, God is to be seen in every event; but, in the superstitious trust referred to, it is assumed, farther, that certain events are combined in a mysterious manner. We may believe in the connexion of every event with God as its author ; while we do not believe, but rather positively deny, that events no way causally, or morally, or religiously connected, Have yet an inexplicable association, supposed to be the means of widening the sphere of man's knowledge, but in reality the means of perplexing and confounding him. There is no impossibility involved in the Stoic idea, that, according to the constitution of things, certain signs should precede certain occurrences.! We do not deny the possibility of God establishing such a harmony between things that have no visible relation; but we deny, as a matter of fact, that He has instituted such a correspondence. The burden of proof lies on those who maintain the positive doctrine ; and the evidence furnished is as visionary as are the fancies of those who dwell in this region of dreams. A few casual coincidences, eagerly seized upon by an excited temper, are no proof of a connexion, causal or contemplated. Nor do we find much difficulty in explaining the mystic or superstitious belief referred to, and that without supposing that it has evidence to build on. It lives in the regions of mists and clouds, where fancy may weave her shapes to suit her humours, and where excited feeling will form every half-seen object into ghosts and spectres.

We can readily enter into some of the feelings which lead men to betake themselves to oracles and auguries. Every one must at times have felt an intense desire to get a

glimpse of the objects behind that veil, which, hanging immediately before us, ever hides futurity from the view. The man is about to take a step which may exercise a momentous power over his future destiny ; he is setting out on an important journey, or commencing a great undertaking; he is a husbandman, and about to sow the crops which are to be his sustenance; or he is a king, invited to enter

*Turner's Anglo-Saxons, B. vii. c. 13.
f See Cic. De Divin., Lib. i. 118, where this view is expounded.